

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for connecting a wireless device to a remote location on a computer network, the method comprising the steps of:

a) transmitting a beacon signal from a beacon unit disposed at a first geographic location, the beacon signal including components indicative of a first code and of a second code, the first code being associated with a remote location on a computer network and the second code being associated with an attribute of the beacon unit;

b) receiving the beacon signal using a beacon signal receiver circuit disposed with a wireless device at a second geographic location, and extracting therefrom the first code and the second code;

c) sending, in response to receiving the beacon signal, control signals indicative of the first code and the second code from the beacon signal receiver circuit to the wireless device;

d) transmitting, in response to receiving the control signals, an RF signal constituting a first message packet from the wireless device to an intermediate location on the computer network, the first message packet being indicative of the first code and the second code;

e) receiving the first message packet at the intermediate location and extracting the first code and the second code therefrom;

f) accessing a computer database from the intermediate location, the database including a plurality of routing information for remote locations on the computer network and a plurality of first codes and associating each of the routing information with at least one of the first codes, and retrieving the routing information associated with the first code received in the beacon signal;

g) transmitting a reply packet including the routing information associated with the first code from the intermediate location across the computer network to the wireless device; and

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h) transmitting, in response to receiving the reply packet, a second message packet from the wireless device to a remote location on the network using the routing information just received, thereby connecting the wireless device to the associated remote location.

2. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting a second message packet from the wireless device to a remote location further comprises the sub-step of transmitting the first code to the remote location.

3. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting a second message packet from the wireless device to a remote location further comprises the sub-step of transmitting the second code to the remote location.

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4. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:
the computer database further includes a plurality of second codes which are associated with the plurality of routing information for remote locations on the computer network; and
the step of accessing a computer database from the intermediate location further comprises the sub-steps of:

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- a) determining whether more than one of the routing information are associated with the first code received in the beacon signal; and
- b) if so, selecting for retrieval such routing information which is also associated with the second code.

5. A method in accordance with claim 4, wherein the step of transmitting a second message packet from the wireless device to a remote location further comprises the sub-step of transmitting the first code to the remote location.

6. A method in accordance with claim 4, wherein the step of transmitting a second message packet from the wireless device to a remote location further comprises the sub-step of transmitting the second code to the remote location.

7. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

a) retrieving, prior to sending control signals from the beacon signal receiver circuit to the wireless device, a third code from a memory unit of the beacon signal receiver circuit, the third code being associated with an attribute of the beacon signal receiver circuit;

b) sending, in response to receiving the beacon signal, control signals indicative of the third code from the beacon signal receiver circuit to the wireless device;

c) transmitting, as a component of the RF signal constituting the first message packet, signals indicative of the third code; and

d) extracting the third code from the first message packet at the intermediate location.

8. A method in accordance with claim 7, wherein the step of transmitting a second message packet from the wireless device to a remote location further comprises the sub-step of transmitting the third code to the remote location.

9. A method in accordance with claim 7, wherein:

the computer database further includes a plurality of third codes which are associated with the plurality of routing information for remote locations on the computer network; and

the step of accessing a computer database from the intermediate location further comprises the sub-steps of:

a) determining whether more than one of the routing information are associated with the first code received in the beacon signal; and

11. A method for connecting a wireless device to a remote location on a computer network, the wireless device including a processor and a transmitter/receiver for sending and receiving radio frequency signals to provide two-way digital communication between the processor and the computer network, the method comprising the steps of:

- 5 a) transmitting a beacon signal indicative of a first code from a beacon unit disposed at a location geographically removed from the geographic location of the wireless device;
- b) receiving the beacon signal with a beacon signal receiver circuit disposed with the wireless device, the beacon signal receiver circuit being operably connected to the processor of the wireless device;
- 10 c) extracting the first code from the beacon signal using the beacon signal receiver circuit;
- d) sending control signals including the first code from the beacon signal receiver circuit to the processor of the wireless device;
- 15 e) transmitting RF signals, in response to receiving the control signals including the first code from the beacon signal receiver circuit, from the wireless device to the computer network; and
- f) connecting the wireless device to a remote location on the computer network which is associated with the first code.

12. A method in accordance with claim 11, wherein the beacon signal is a radio frequency (RF) signal.

13. A method in accordance with claim 12, wherein the frequency of the RF beacon signal is different from the frequency used by the RF transmitter/receiver of the wireless device to communicate with the network.

14. A method in accordance with claim 11, wherein the beacon signal is an optical signal.

15. A method in accordance with claim 11, wherein the beacon signal is an acoustic signal.

16. A method in accordance with claim 11, wherein the step of transmitting a beacon signal from the beacon unit further includes the sub-steps of:

- a) accessing, prior to transmitting the beacon signal, a beacon unit memory using a beacon unit processor, the beacon unit processor being operably connected to the beacon unit memory;
- b) retrieving the first code from a memory location in the beacon unit memory using the beacon unit processor;
- c) passing the first code from the beacon unit processor to a modulator constituting a third portion of the beacon unit, the modulator being operably connected to the processor; and
- d) modulating a carrier signal with the modulator to include modulation indicative of the first code for transmission as a component of the beacon signal.

17. A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the first code includes routing information embedded therein which is sufficient, of itself, to direct the connection of the wireless device to the desired remote location on the network.

18. A method in accordance with claim 16, wherein the first code does not include routing information embedded therein which is sufficient, of itself, to direct the connection of the wireless device to the desired remote location on the network.

19. A method in accordance with claim 18, wherein the step of connecting the wireless device to a remote location on the computer network further comprises the steps of:

- 5 a) sending a first message packet from the wireless device to an intermediate location on the network, the first message packet including information indicative of the first code;
- b) receiving the first message packet at the intermediate location and extracting the first code therefrom;
- 10 c) accessing a computer database from the intermediate location, the database including a plurality of routing information for remote locations on the computer network and a plurality of first codes and associating each of the routing information with at least one of the first codes, and retrieving the routing information associated with the first code received in the beacon signal;
- 15 d) transmitting the routing information associated with the first code from the intermediate location across the computer network to the wireless device; and
- e) transmitting, in response to receiving the routing information associated with the first code, a second message packet from the wireless device to a different remote location on the network as directed by the routing information just received.

20. A method in accordance with claim 19, further comprising the steps of:

- a) receiving the second message packet at the different remote location on the network;
- b) sending, in response to receiving the second message packet, information from 5 the different remote location back across the network to the wireless device; and
- c) receiving with the wireless device the information from the different remote location and displaying the information to a user.